

MAIB SAFETY BULLETIN 05/2002

Collision between the river cruiser

Nottingham Princess

and Trent Bridge, Nottingham

15 November 2002

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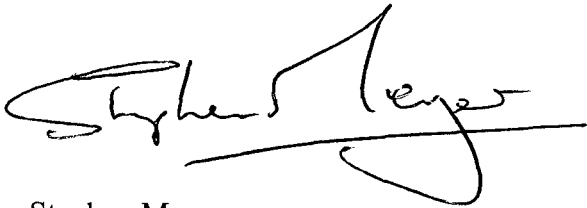
This document, containing Safety Recommendations, has been produced for marine safety purposes only on the basis of information available to date.

The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 1999 provide for the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents to make recommendations at any time during the course of an investigation if, in his opinion, it is necessary or desirable to do so.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) is carrying out an investigation of the collision on 15 November 2002 between the river cruiser *Nottingham Princess* and Trent Bridge, Nottingham. The MAIB will publish a publicly available report on completion of the investigation.

While on an evening river cruise and proceeding upriver into a strong river current, *Nottingham Princess* struck scaffolding around the bridge and became "pinned" beam on to the current on the upriver side of the bridge.

This incident resulted in all her passengers being taken off the vessel with the assistance of the emergency services. Despite a scaffolding pole going through one of the boat's windows there were only minor injuries such as cuts and bruises suffered by a small number of passengers; however the potential consequences were far more serious.



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SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

Trent Bridge is one of the major crossings over the Trent in the city of Nottingham. In the spring of 2002 Nottinghamshire City Council undertook a major painting operation of the bridge which involved the erection of scaffold around the bridge. British Waterways, being responsible for safety of navigation on the river, were consulted regarding the scaffold. The navigable width through the centre arch was reduced from 30 m to about 15 m due to the scaffold. The work was initially expected to be completed in September, however, it was delayed due to the old paint requiring removal by sand blasting and continued through the autumn.

Nottingham Princess was a class V category B river cruiser, 5 years old and of 24.5 m length, licensed to carry 172 passengers on the River Trent only. She was carrying 131 passengers and 8 crew when she left her moorings at just after 2000 on 15 November 2002 intending to go for a 3 hour cruise. The river level was high and the current strong due to persistent rainfall over the preceding few days.

At about 2035, whilst transiting the bridge's centre arch, she struck the scaffolding, was swung to starboard and was pinned into position on the bridge's upriver north buttress by the strong river current. Some damage was done to the vessel by the initial impact and further damage by the subsequent impact including a scaffolding pole going through one of the windows on the lower deck.

The passengers were taken off the vessel with the assistance of the emergency services which included the use of a hydraulic lift. Only minor injuries such as cuts and bruises were suffered by a small number of passengers, however the boat was unable to be freed from the bridge until the afternoon of Monday 18 November. She subsequently underwent repairs.

The MAIB considers that the potential consequences of this incident were far more serious.

Safety Recommendations

To all UK competent harbour authorities and all bodies responsible for safety of navigation on UK rivers:

1. Conduct a risk assessment of passenger carrying craft, in any area under your jurisdiction, where there has been an alteration made to the navigable width of bridges or channels, or any other constraint placed on navigation, through scaffolding or other such temporary structures.
2. Advise owners of passenger carrying craft, to conduct their own risk assessments before using such areas.